

DIAMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4 Marquis Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301-840-7177
www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/diamondes
Dan Walder, Principal
Spencer Delisle, Principal Intern

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK OF POLICIES, PRACTICES, PROCEDURES

WELCOME -- The staff welcomes you to Diamond Elementary School. We are confident that your child will receive an excellent education here, and value your support as we work together to ensure every student's success.

SCHOOL INFORMATION -- Montgomery County Public Schools is one of 24 Maryland public school systems--third largest in the state and one of the nation's 20 largest, covering 500 square miles, serving over 141,000 students in 202 schools, and operating with a budget of over two billion dollars. Diamond Elementary School has approximately 670 students, from kindergarten through fifth grade. The school facility has 29 classrooms, a gymnasium, an all-purpose room/cafeteria, media center, and computer laboratory. In addition to classroom teachers, the school has full time support in these areas: art, music, physical education, reading, ESOL, resource, media, speech, counselling and occasional support from physical and occupational therapy. Our health room technician is also here full time.

School Hours:	Office Hours	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
	First Bell	9:10 a.m.
	Late Bell	9:25 a.m.
	Grades K – 5	9:25 a.m. – 3:50 p.m.
	Early Dismissal	1:20 p.m.



VISION STATEMENT -- The Diamond community is an active partnership of students, parents, and staff committed to developing successful readers, writers, problem solvers, and model citizens through trust, mutual respect, positive attitudes, and effective communication resulting in high student achievement and social development.

MISSION STATEMENT -- The Diamond Elementary School community works together to promote excellence in teaching and rigor in learning in a stimulating differentiated learning environment, developing confidence, and individual success for all students.

SCHOOL HOURS -- 9:25 a.m. to 3:50 p.m.



Students should not arrive prior to 9:00 a.m., the time students will be permitted to proceed to classrooms. There is no staff supervision before 9:05 a.m. anywhere on the school property. **Students are to be in their classroom when the 9:25 a.m. bell rings.** Those not in their classroom will be marked absent. (See policy for late arrivals). At 3:50 p.m., all students will be dismissed. Students are expected to be on time, remain the full school day, and come prepared for class. This is very important for sustained learning. Parents, we request your support in helping your child(ren) be at school everyday. Please plan family vacations to coincide with school holidays.

LATE ARRIVALS -- When a student comes to school late (after the 9:25 a.m. bell), a parent or guardian must escort the child(ren) to the main office to sign them in. **This is a security issue for both students and staff.** Please do not escort the student to the classroom. Students are not to be dropped in the parking lot and left to enter the building unescorted. The office will provide all tardy students a late pass to give to their teachers. Students who arrive at their classrooms late without a pass will be sent back to the main office to receive one.

EARLY STUDENT PICK UP -- When parents need to take their child(ren) out of school they must report to the office, sign their child out, and wait until their child is called to the office. This procedure is for the safety of our students and to keep interruptions to the classroom at a minimum.

STUDENT ABSENCES -- Parents have a number of options available to report a student's absence, travel plans, tardiness, or appointment:

- Go to the Diamond Elementary website, click on “Report a Student Absence,” and fill out the form with the specific details, including the reason for the absence (We’ll forward a copy to his/her teacher.)**
- Send an email to the teacher (please copy Mrs. Irish and Ms. McCaffrey); Call the Attendance Secretary, at 301-840-7177, on the day of the absence/appointment; Write a note and put it in your student’s backpack to take to his/her teacher.

**This is a convenient, quick way to notify the school. You don’t need to take the time to call, write a note, or send an e-mail. You can fill in all the details under “Anything else?” Here is the link:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/about/absenceform.aspx>

If we do not hear from you, you will get an automated message reporting your child’s absence. Parents should keep children at home when illness is suspected, a communicable disease has been diagnosed or lice nits have been found. After five consecutive days of absence, or chronic absences during the school year a physician’s note will be required.

Absence Policy

AM absent, if a student arrives more than 2 hours late

PM absent, if a student leaves more than 2 hours early

If a student is absent for more than any 2 hours during the school day, it is considered a half day absence.

If a student is present for less than 2 hours of the entire school day, it is considered a full day absence.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL-- Walkers, bus-riders, bicyclists, and car riders share the front entrance to the school. To improve traffic congestions and safety at this entrance, we strongly encourage all students who are not designated bus riders to WALK to school. Morning line-up is on the front sidewalk for grades 1-5, and on the blacktop for kindergarteners, which is located on the playground area in front of the school. Students proceed to line-up by crossing in designated crosswalks located directly in front of and to the right of the school building. On inclement weather days, morning line-up will occur in the gym. Students can begin arriving to school no earlier than 9:05 a.m. The late bell rings at 9:25 a.m., and students are expected to be in their classrooms at that time.

BUS SCHEDULE -- Students need to be at their morning bus stops for pick up at their appointed time and will be dismissed at 3:50 p.m. to board buses home. All bus stops are designated by the Department of Transportation.

Bus route schedules are posted on the school website.



<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/busroutes/02570bus.pdf>

To identify the appropriate bus for your child, parents are encouraged to review the bus routes, identify the bus route and bus stop description that is closest to your home and most convenient. Then, report to the specific bus stop each day. In the instance that transportation has assigned a specific bus stop, please adhere to transportation's assignment to avoid overcrowded buses. Students should be ready and waiting to board the bus at least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Students who wish to ride home on a friend's bus or get off their own bus at a friend's stop must bring a permission note from their parent/guardian. **Questions related to MCPS bus schedules and routes should be referred to the transportation cluster supervisor, Sharon Stream, (301) 353-0822.**

SAFETY -- Parents are responsible for student safety at bus stops (school safety patrols assist). Students who wish to go home with a classmate after school (either walking or riding a different bus) must bring a note to the office in the morning for verification. No students will be permitted to ride a different bus if that bus is over capacity. In addition, the bus drivers will not allow students on buses without written parent/school permission.

More information on riding the bus is included here:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/news/What%20you%20should%20know%20about%20riding%20the%20bus.pdf>

For problems concerning bus routes and stop locations, call Mrs. Sharon Stream, Transportation Route Supervisor at 301-353-0822

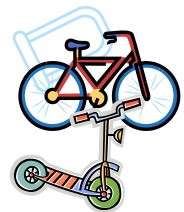
CAR-RIDERS -- If you drive your child to school, you may you may drop your child off in the parking lot at the designated drop off area and school staff will direct your child to proceed to morning line up. During dismissal, your child will meet you at the same designated location. **Cars are not permitted in the bus circle during arrival or dismissal** as this drive way is for MCPS buses only. Marquis Drive becomes very congested during arrival and dismissal. Consider using the designated car drop off location, rather than parking on Marquis Drive.

KINDERGARTEN PICK UP--Kindergarten parents meet their students on the Kindergarten blacktop at 3:50 p.m. If you are carpooling, please park your car and walk up to the kindergarten blacktop, which is located on the playground area in front of the school, and go to the kindergarten suite doors to meet your child.

*A detailed outline of arrival and dismissal procedures can be found at this link:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/news/2015%20DES%20Drop%20Off%20and%20Pick%20Up%20Procedures.pdf>

BICYCLES & SCOOTERS -- Students in grades 4 or 5 may ride bicycles/scooters to school with written parent permission and the use of a safety helmet. **Bicycles/scooters are to be walked while on school premises**, locked to the rack, and not used during the school day. **NO HELMET=NO BIKE!** Parents need to provide the main office with written permission before a student can be allowed to ride their bike/scooter to school.



BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROGRAM -- Between 9:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m., breakfast is available. The cost of breakfast is \$1.30. Students who wish to have breakfast here at school are welcome, but are expected to be in their classroom by 9:15 when the bell rings or they will be marked tardy.

PARENTS – Please develop a plan to ensure that your child has a lunch everyday. A nutritious lunch is essential for optimal learning. Establish a specific location in your home to place a lunch or lunch money for your child(ren). **Lunch money will not be available from the office; a peanut butter/jelly or cheese sandwich will be offered.**

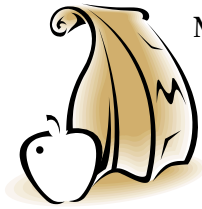
Students may bring their own lunch or purchase a lunch at school. For those students wishing to purchase lunch or milk, we encourage you to deposit money in their cafeteria account to avoid monies being lost or

misplaced at school. Checks made payable to the Diamond Cafeteria or cash can be brought to the cafeteria manager or the main office. A new online account system is also available on the Diamond website. The cost for lunch is \$2.55 which includes milk. Students may purchase milk separately for \$0.60.

Snack items, which range in price from \$0.60 to \$1.00, can be purchased after lunches have been consumed. However, we are very concerned with the growing health problems for children and will be limiting snack food purchases to one item only per student.

MCPS MENU -- <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/foodserv/menus/cafemenus.aspx>

FREE/REDUCED BREAKFAST AND LUNCH -- Parents who wish to apply for free or reduced meals can do so by using the application form provided. Once completed and returned to us it will be forwarded to the MCPS Food Services office for processing. You will receive written notification once eligibility is determined. The reduced price for breakfast is \$0.40 and the reduced price for lunch is \$0.40.



MCPS students who qualified for free or reduced meals last school year keep their eligibility until September 28, 2015. Parents must re-apply for the 2015-2016 school year by completing the application, which is sent home during the first week of school. Students who have not re-applied or do not qualify will have to purchase their meals at full price as of October 1, 2015.

CONFERENCES -- Close communication between the home and the school is important. Parents are encouraged to contact school staff to schedule a conference. No concern or question is too small or unimportant to the progress of your child's education.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES -- These will be scheduled on an appointment basis in November. These conferences provide a planned opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss a child's achievement and to plan cooperatively for continued student progress. Parent-teacher conferences will be held on November 11 and 12, 2015.

DELAYED OPENING OR EARLY CLOSING OF SCHOOL -- Parents should make arrangements for their children in the event schools are closed early or school opening is delayed. Parents are encouraged to listen to local radio and TV stations, the MCPS website, or call 301-279-3673 for information. **Please do not call the school for this information.** Parents must discuss with their children what they are to do when there is an emergency early closing. The school will attempt to assist students who are unsure of where to go during an early dismissal.

When a two-hour delayed opening is announced students should not arrive at Diamond before 11:00 a.m. when they will be allowed into the building to line up. **There is no supervision for students before this time.** School will begin promptly at 11:25 a.m. Students who arrive after this time will need to follow the procedures for late arrivals.

HOMEWORK POLICY -- Homework is an extension of classroom learning and will provide an opportunity for additional practice, independent work, enrichment, and concept or skill development. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/about/DES%20Homework%20Policy.pdf>

DISCIPLINE POLICY -- The Diamond discipline policy is based on three key messages: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. We have incorporated these words into our local discipline policy so that the children can develop strong character and make good behavior choices on a daily basis. We look at each incident as an opportunity to teach character development rather than utilizing only punitive measures. Please discuss the discipline policy with your child(ren), sign, and return the tear-off sheet that comes home in the beginning of the year. School staff appreciates your cooperation. More information Diamond's policy and philosophy can be found at the attached link.

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/about/DES%202015%20Behavior%20Policy%20Letter.pdf>

Please discuss the discipline policy with your child(ren), sign, and return the tear-off sheet. The school staff appreciates your cooperation.

HEALTH -- Students attending school are expected to be able to participate in the total school program (classroom, physical education, and recess activities). When a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be contacted to take the child home. We encourage parents not to send their child to school if they are ill.

Additional information on the health room is available here:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/about/Health%20Room%20Information.pdf>

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES -- Any questions or concerns, please contact your personal physician or the Health Department (301-217-6995). Let the school know if your child will be out of school due to a communicable disease.

MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS -- All medications (even over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, cough medicine, etc.) must be administered under the supervision of the health room personnel. This policy covers both long and short term use. A copy of the “**Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication**” form is available from the Health Room. If your child will need medication for the opening of school, please contact the school during the month of August. Health Room personnel will be available starting August 20, 2015. **Students may not carry medication to or from school. All medications must be handled by a parent or guardian.**

LOST & FOUND -- Found articles of clothing, hats, gloves, lunch boxes, and other items will be periodically displayed throughout the year during special events. Children should check the LOST and FOUND area for missing possessions. The LOST and FOUND storage is in the hallway across from the Art room. Eyeglasses and other delicate items are secured in the main office. **Please label all clothing.**

PARENT INFORMATION -- Parents must keep the school advised when they move, change home, work, or emergency phone numbers, and/or place of employment. This is important if the school needs to contact parents in the case of national or state emergencies, injury, sickness, absence, or educational program. Parents can call the main office at 301-840-7177 with any changes.

PROPER ATTIRE -- Students are expected to come to school each day in appropriate attire. If a student comes to school inappropriately dressed, they will be sent to the office to either call home for replacement clothing or, when possible, asked to cover the article of clothing with a jacket, sweater, etc. Clothing that is not acceptable at school are midriff tops; belly shirts; halters; see-through or net shirts; any shorts, skirts, or dresses worn too short; and any item of clothing that presents a message or words deemed inappropriate for school.

PTA -- The PTA is a vital part of our school community. Parents are encouraged to participate and support this group. The PTA President for 2015-2016 is Darwin Johnson. Please feel free to contact her to learn more about how you can become involved. Look for the *Diamond Gems* to come home once a month filled with all the latest news from our PTA.

SCHOOL SAFETY PATROLS -- Diamond Elementary has a fine group of responsible boys and girls serving as school safety patrols. At 8:55 a.m. and 3:50 p.m., patrols begin duty. Rob Golden, Physical Education teacher, is the patrol sponsor. Parents should impress upon their children the importance of following patrol instructions.

TRAFFIC SAFETY -- **PARKING** – Please obey the no parking signs in the bus lane, handicapped spaces and reserved spaces at the front of the school. The bus lane is marked with yellow paint. For your convenience, our parking lot is used as a “Kiss and Ride” area for drop-off and pick-up. Parents must be patient when using the area. **The bus lane is off limits to automobiles between the hours of 8:30 – 9:35 a.m. and 3:10 – 4:15 p.m.**

VISITOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM --For the enhanced safety of our students, all visitors are required to sign in using the Visitor Management System. When you come to the front door, press the red button and wait to be buzzed in (Access Control System). Once inside, please proceed to the main office and sign in. Please bring your driver’s license to sign in on the system.

VOLUNTEERS -- Parents are always welcome. Please look for information to come home at the beginning of the school year from the PTA requesting to know of your interest to volunteer through the PTA or contact your child’s teacher to inquire about opportunities to volunteer in the classroom or other areas of the school. All volunteers must complete the Diamond Elementary Volunteer training before volunteering at the school. The volunteer training information is available on our school website:



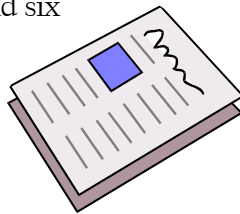
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/parents/index.aspx>

BIRTHDAYS -- Birthday treats are not permitted at school for students in grades K-5. Birthdays in grades K-5 are recognized on the morning announcements on the day of the child’s birthday, and they receive a birthday sticker and pencil. An alternative arrangement is made for students whose birthdays fall on weekends, holidays, and during the summer so they can be recognized during the school year. **Invitations can be distributed at school only if every student in the class is invited *and* distribution does not disrupt instruction.** Teachers are not permitted to provide class or student contact information to parents. Contact information that is shareable is provided in the PTA directory.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS-- Classroom parties that are held during the year are for Halloween, Valentines Day, and end of the year parties. As a gentle reminder, please remember that MCPS guidelines note all foods brought into the school must be pre-packaged and store bought, with a list of the ingredients. Home baked goods are not permitted for distribution at school. Classroom celebration food items must include a selection of healthy food items such as fruit platters, vegetable platters, etc.

NEWSLETTERS -- Parents should look for our newsletter, the *Diamond Mine*, to come via e-mail. The *Diamond Mine* includes items of school interest to both parents and students as well as a calendar of upcoming events. Electronic copies of the *Diamond Mine* will remain available on our school website (<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/newsletter/>). If you would like a paper copy of the *Diamond Mine*, please complete the request form handed out in the beginning of the year.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES -- Our school will conduct ten (10) required fire drills and six (6) required emergency drills during the school year. In the event of an emergency evacuation of the school for a sustained period of time, students will walk with their teachers or be transported to Quince Orchard High School (301-840-4686). This constitutes a portion of our contingency plan for unusual circumstances far beyond the routine fire drill procedures. In the event of an emergency or disaster, it is critical that we have up to date emergency information on your child. **Please keep the school office informed of any changes in emergency contact and/or day care arrangements.** Specific information about our school emergency procedures are posted on our website at the following link: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/schools/diamondes/about/school%20emergency%20procedure%20letter-%202015.pdf>



GRADING AND REPORTING -- Standards-based report cards give parents more information about what, and how students are learning. The MCPS website has several resources to provide detailed information regarding standards-based grading. Here are the links.

Understanding End of Year Reading Benchmarks: [A Parent's Guide](#)

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/info/grading/EndOfYearReading-ParentGuide.pdf>

- Learn about standards-based report cards: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/grading/report-cards.aspx>
- Frequently Asked Questions about Curriculum 2.0 Standards-Based Report Cards: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/2.0/reportcardfaq.aspx>